

SPECIAL MEETING – MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
January 25, 2014

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson called the special meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Council Chamber of the Audrey P. Beck Building.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Kegler, Marcellino, Moran, Paterson, Raymond, Ryan, Shapiro, Wassmundt

Excused: Kochenburger

Staff: Town Manager Matt Hart, Assistant Town Manager Maria Capriola, Director of Finance Cherie Trahan, Director of Parks and Recreation Curt Vincente, Director of Information Technology Jaime Russell, Director of Emergency Management Fran Raiola, Director of Housing and Building Mike Nintean, Library Director Leslie McDonough, Director of Human Services Pat Schneider, Fire Chief Dave Dagon, Director of Facilities Bill Hammon, Mansfield Downtown Partnership Executive Director Cynthia van Zelm, and soon to be Director of Public Works John Carrington.

Mayor Paterson welcomed Mr. Carrington to Mansfield.

II. NEW BUSINESS

1. Overview of Major Projects and Initiatives

The Town Manager provided an overview of the major projects in Town and the following items were flagged:

- An update from Masonicare will be scheduled for a future Council meeting.
- Information provided to the Council regarding the last time the Downtown Partnership's rent was approved will be distributed to members.
- Usage information for the parking garage, as presented at the last management meeting, will be distributed to members.
- Concerns regarding the number of jaywalkers crossing Rte. 195 near the Dog Lane Café were expressed. A crosswalk was requested but denied by DOT. The Town will continue to explore possibilities as resources permit.
- The Traffic Authority will review the parking spaces in the driveway near Moe's.

2. Revenue and Expenditures Projections FY 2013/2014

The Director of Finance reviewed the revenue and expenditure projections for the current fiscal year and the following items were flagged:

- During the budget process a replacement schedule for vehicles and repairs will be provided.

3. Early Revenue Projections FY 2014/2015

The Director of Finance provided early revenue projections for the upcoming year and the following items were flagged:

- Information itemizing which Storrs Center buildings are included in the Assessor's preliminary real estate list will be provided.
- The PILOT status of Mansfield Hollow will be checked as will any federal "PILOT" fund sources.

4. Early Expenditures Projections FY 2014/2015

The Director of Finance provided preliminary information on FY2014/2015 expenditures including a brief review of the Boards of Education budgets. Mayor Paterson complimented the working relationships among the Superintendents and the Town Manager.

Town Manager Matt Hart stated he is planning to submit a current service budget to the Council. Council members discussed the state police staffing goals, the role of UConn's

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police department in Mansfield and the impact of Storrs Center. The police study will be provided to those members who do not have a copy.

5. Town Council Goal Setting and Policy Recommendations

The Assistant Town Manager described the goal setting exercise to be conducted at the January 27, 2014 meeting.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Ric Hossack, Middle Turnpike, stated the goal of the Council should be to reduce taxes and asked the following questions:

- Will the software enhancements lead to a reduction in staff?
- Will the temporary employees at Storrs Center be eliminated as the project is completed?
- How many playgrounds do we need?
- Why will the sewer project tax people who are not benefiting from the project?
- When will the voters be able to vote on the sewer project?

Pat Suprenant, Mansfield Independent News asked the following questions:

- What is the Town's policy regarding the hiring back of retired employees and are they being hired as consultants or are they adding to their retirement benefits?
- Is the contribution toward the parking garage from the developer in the form of a gift, abatement, loan, or in kind services?
- Will the one million dollars in unanticipated revenue be used to reduce the mill rate or to pay back the one shot revenues used in last year's budget?
- Will the Town again be accessing the medical insurance reserve or the special education fund reserves?
- What is the total estimated cost of all in kind services?
- Does the 6.3 million dollar PILOT estimate include the recent sale of property to UConn from Campus Crossing LLC or will this and other recent land transfers be reflected in next year's formulae?
- Is Mansfield being penalized because of our cooperation with Connecticut Water Company as the loss of PILOT funds will pressure the Town to increase the grand list?
- Will the public have an opportunity, once again, to address budget questions directly to the Director of Finance?
- What is the total estimated cost of legal fees for Mansfield and how are they to be spent?
- Where did the \$450,000 which was put back in Board of Education's medical insurance reserve fund come from?
- Is the Region 19 increase of \$50,000 in addition to what was allocated last year?

Arthur Smith, Mulberry Road, wishes to find out more about the Blum and Shapiro audit and have a discussion about the discretion the Town Manager has regarding the implementation of the recommendations. Mr. Smith agrees with the suggestion that the Minimum Budget Requirement be redefined for the Town as it is unique due to the amount of state property. Mr. Smith also questioned the topography of the site for the accessible playground.

Town Manager Matt Hart responded to questions of fact, other questions will be addressed during the budget process:

- The goal of implementing enhanced software is not to reduce staff but to provide a level of control on the hiring of additional staff and to free up staff to work on other initiatives.

- Temporary employment positions related to Storrs Center will be eliminated when the work is completed. Any additional hiring will be done using the usual competitive process.
- The funding of playgrounds and improvements is a Council policy decision. The Town does have an obligation to maintain the structures. The Town Manager suggested a town wide playground/active recreation study might be undertaken in the future.
- All necessary funds for the design of the Four Corners sewer project have been appropriated. A policy decision will have to be made by the Council before the issuance of any general obligation bonds.
- Former employees are usually not hired as contractors but on a temporary part time basis. Mr. Hultgren is working to complete some projects during his separation leave.
- Leyland's contribution to the parking garage overruns will be in cash over a multi-year period and includes a nominal interest rate.
- The Council will decide the best use of FY2013/2014 unanticipated state revenues.
- Questions regarding Board of Education reserve funds should be referred to the Board.
- A total accounting of all in kind services will be difficult to provide but the subject can be looked at within the budget process.
- There is a lag time regarding PILOT funds and recent land sales and acquisitions. These changes will be discussed during the revaluation presentation.
- The agreement with Connecticut Water Company does not put the Town in the position of arbitrarily growing our grand list. The Town, under the auspices of and the direction of the Council, has been working to grow the list in a responsible and managed way that is compatible with the Plan of Conservation and Development and land use regulations.
- Yes, as in previous years, citizens will be able to ask budget question via the website.
- Summary data regarding legal fees will be provided.
- The increase in Region 19's budget is over the current year's budget.
- In concert with and under the oversight of the Finance Committee, the Town does implement some of the recommendations of the auditors. The Town has received and continues to receive an unqualified opinion on the audit.
- The Council did highlight the Minimum Budget Requirements in its conversations and follow-up communications with our legislators.
- There are some challenges with the topography of the site chosen for the accessible playground which have been reviewed. The Council will have the opportunity to review and potentially approve any in kind services.

Ms. Wassmundt requested the questions asked by the public during public comment be made part of the record.

Ms. Wassmundt raised questions regarding the cost of the playground and supported the idea of a Recreation Master Plan. Mr. Shapiro raised a point of order commenting that the agenda does not provide, at this point, for additional Council member comments. Mayor Paterson upheld the point of order and asked Council members to either put their questions in writing or to raise them at the January 27, 2014 meeting.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Moran moved and Mr. Shapiro seconded to adjourn the meeting at 12:10 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

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Elizabeth Paterson, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk

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